



Finding a Job is a Job

by Connie Blaine

A successful job search requires time and effort. Most people work 40 hours a week. So if you're unemployed, you should plan on devoting that much time to a job search. But first, you need to get organized, and plan how to look for work strategically.

Often the hardest thing is just getting started, but don't delay or let anything stop you from working your job search plan.

Certain things are essential for an effective job search. You've done an assessment of yourself. You know your personality type and values; your skills and interests. Before you actually apply for any jobs, begin your job search by gathering and organizing all the information you can to promote your qualifications and satisfy the needs of a prospective employer.

First, get organized.

If you've never been an organized person, now's the time to develop this skill. Establish measurable goals and schedule your days. Plan, then do job-search activities to meet those goals. For example, you could set Monday morning, 8:00 – noon for identifying your skills. Then the afternoon could be spent preparing a resume. Tuesday, you could spend two hours in a library or on the internet to look up 10 potential employers to contact. Then you might plan to spend the rest of the day and Wednesday actually making contacts. At the end of each day review how you did, and revise your plans as needed. But keep up the pace—challenge yourself.

Have clear occupational objectives. No job seeker is really looking for “anything.” Use what you learned from your self-assessment to define your employment goals.

Next, look at the list of your skills you've identified and narrow it down to those pertaining to the particular types of job(s) you are seeking.

Prepare a personal data sheet with all your employment-related information. This will make employment applications easier to complete.

Write one or more basic resumes that you can adapt and customize in order to advertise your skills to each potential employer.

The Hidden Job Market and Networking.

The vast majority (80 percent or more) of job openings are not advertised! Most employers do not need to advertise; they have enough applicants without it, through “word of mouth”, or networking. Employers prefer to hire on a referral from someone they trust. This is what makes networking so important.

Direct employer contact is part of your campaign to sell your qualifications. Make a list of potential employers. As your job search progresses, you will continually change this list. One excellent resource is FirmFind, a searchable list of all the companies in Utah (see below). You can search by area or occupation to find employers' names, addresses and phone numbers. Another way is using your local public library. You can use Chamber of Commerce listings, industry guides, newspapers and the phone book. Now, plan a strategy to approach each potential employer. Develop a short “sound bite” by describing aloud the job you seek, the skills you offer, and why you are the best candidate. When contacting an employer directly, talk to the person who would supervise you in your desired job, even if there are not jobs currently open.

Planning, persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful job search! ☺



For more information:

- <http://jobs.utah.gov/firmfind/pgMain.asp>
FirmFind
- <http://jobs.utah.gov/Regions/EC.asp> *Locate your local DWS Employment Center: see job openings, talk to an employment counselor, apply for support services, and use a computer for job-search activities.*
- <http://jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/guides/JSTools.asp> *Job search advice*
- <http://content.monster.com/> *Job search advice*